THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

582 fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue: with yet others marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy obviously cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of his classificatory 'aunts' or 'nieces'. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife's elder sister, his mother-in-law, his younger brother's wife or widow and any other woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grandmother or granddaughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship. A few cases are known of men marrying their great-aunts or grand-nieces.

As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *mandāri* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *manriyo* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

[835] So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

● 604 An uncle stands in a joking relationship to all his nieces except the daughters of his own sister. For example, a man and his uncle's daughter's daughter are in this relationship.

607 As elsewhere in India, a woman and her husband's younger brothers or a man and his wife's younger sisters are specially privileged. So are grand-
603 mother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*ange*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

586 by the fact that Chewa had himself turned the girl out and that between her first and second marriages she had spent two years in her father's house. The matter was thus a difficult one, and was still further complicated by Pandu being a blacksmith who probably did not anticipate fair treatment from the tribal panchayat.

X 674 604 There was a very curious and tragic murder when young sixteen-year old Marvi Hunga killed Hirma, a boy three years younger than himself. These two boys were related as uncle and nephew; Hunga's mother was married to the uncle of Hirma's father. This relationship is a privileged one. Just as a grandson may joke with his grandmother, so an uncle may abuse his nephew and even threaten to sleep with his mother, and neither uncle nor nephew is supposed to take any notice of it.

But on this occasion when Hunga met his young nephew Hirma in a field and asked him where he was going, the younger boy abused his uncle's mother and wife saying that he would keep them both as his wives; this annoyed Hunga and he drew his bow and shot the boy with an arrow. The incident apparently had nothing whatever behind it. The boys were not drunk and were on good terms. Hunga seems to have been suddenly, but quite improperly, excited by the abuse given by his nephew, and in a few moments two lives were ruined.

VIII

THE LAMHADA

583 Among the Maria, as in many other parts of tribal India, there is an arrangement whereby youths from poor families who cannot afford the price of a bride can serve for her for three, five or seven years. In Bastar such a youth is known as Lamhada, Lamanai, Lamsena or Gharjamai. The relations between the Lamhada and his future parents-in-law is not always a happy one, and it is complicated by the intimate proximity in which he has to live with the girl to whom he is not yet married. Sometimes, however, especially if the Lamhada happens to make the girl pregnant, the marriage

X 674 578 583 is celebrated before the end of his term of service. Only two cases of murder have arisen out of a Lamhada